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OIL FOR THE LAMP

Vol 1 Issue #2:

Seeking Light

LIGHT IN RELGION AND SPIRITUALITY

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Oil For The Lamp
#2: Seeking Light

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Editor's Note

Oil For The Lamp is a Magazine about Religion, Spirituality, Mythology, and Folklore It is free for Everyone. It is intended for Anyone wanting to learn about different beliefs. The articles are simple and from an Interfaith Approach. Some Issues of the Magazine cover topics and How different beliefs view it. Some Issues may concentrate on a specific Belief System or be random topic Articles issue.
I hope that Oil For The Lamp magazine will give your Lamp fuel in Your Spiritual Search. May you Find Peace and Blessings!

In this Issue the Symbolism and meaning Of Light in different beliefs is explored.. The Issue is split in Two Parts. Part One is Light in Different Beliefs. Part Two is Light in Religions. Issue 2 is Titled Seeking Light after an Article in this issue with the same name. I hope you enjoy!

R. F. Cayea
Creator and Editor

PART 1: LIGHT IN DIFFERENT BELIEFS

LIGHT IN ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS

Light is one of the most universal and ancient symbols in human history. It represents life, wisdom, divinity, enlightenment and hope. Many ancient civilizations developed elaborate cosmologies and mythologies around the concept of light and its sources, such as the sun, the moon, the stars, and fire. In this article, we will explore some examples of how light was used as a symbol in different ancient cultures and what meanings it conveyed.

The Ancient Egyptians : The Sun God Ra

The ancient Egyptians worshiped the sun as the supreme god Ra, who was believed to create and sustain all life on earth. Ra was depicted as a falcon-headed man with a solar disk on his head, or as a scarab beetle that rolled the sun across the sky. The sun was also associated with other deities, such as Horus, the god of kingship and the sky, and Amun, the hidden and mysterious god of creation. The sun was seen as a source of life, order, justice, and truth. The pharaohs, who were the earthly representatives of Ra, built magnificent temples and pyramids to honor him and ensure his favor.

Some examples of how light was used as a symbol in ancient Egyptian culture are:

- The Eye of Ra: This powerful symbol represents the sun's rays, protection, and destruction. It was often depicted as a stylized eye with a cobra on top. The Eye of Ra was sometimes personified as a goddess, such as Sekhmet, who could unleash plagues and wars upon enemies.
- The Ankh: This was a symbol that represented eternal life and resurrection. It was shaped like a cross with a loop on top. The ankh was often held by gods and pharaohs as a sign of their authority and connection to Ra.
- The Obelisk: This tall stone pillar had a pyramid-shaped top. The obelisk symbolized the sun's rays and Ra's power. It was often erected in pairs at the entrances of temples or in open spaces.

The Ancient Greeks: The Olympian Gods

The ancient Greeks had a complex pantheon of gods and goddesses who resided on Mount Olympus and governed various aspects of nature and human life. Among them, several were associated with light in different ways.

For example, Zeus was the king of the gods and the god of thunder and lightning. He wielded a thunderbolt as his weapon and was often depicted with rays of light emanating from his head. Apollo was the god of music, poetry, prophecy, and healing. He was also the god of the sun, who drove a chariot of fire across the sky every day. He was seen as a symbol of reason, harmony, and beauty. Athena was the goddess of wisdom, war, and crafts. She was born from the head of Zeus and was often accompanied by an owl, a creature of the night. She was regarded as a source of intelligence, strategy, and justice.

Some examples of how light was used as a symbol in ancient Greek culture are:

- The Olympic Torch: This was a symbol that represented the sacred fire that burned in honor of Zeus at Olympia, where the Olympic Games were held every four years. The torch was lit by a priestess using sunlight reflected by a mirror and then carried by runners to different cities until it reached its destination.
- The Laurel Wreath: This was a symbol that represented victory and excellence. It was made from the leaves of the laurel tree, which was sacred to Apollo. The laurel wreath was awarded to winners of athletic or artistic competitions, such as poets and musicians.

- The Aegis: This was a symbol that represented protection and power. It was a shield or cloak that belonged to Zeus or Athena. It had an image of Medusa's head on it, which could turn enemies to stone with its gaze. The aegis also had fringes of snakes or lightning bolts.

The Ancient Indians: The Vedic Hymns

The ancient Indians composed a collection of sacred texts known as the Vedas, which contain hymns, rituals, and philosophical speculations about the nature of reality. The Vedas reflect a worldview that is based on the concept of Rta, or cosmic order, which is maintained by various gods and goddesses who represent natural forces and phenomena. Among them, many are related to light in some way. For example, Agni is the god of fire, who is invoked as a messenger between humans and gods. He is also the god of sacrifice, who consumes the offerings and carries them to heaven. Surya is the god of the sun, who is praised as the eye of the world and the giver of life. He is also associated with Savitr, the god who inspires action and creativity. Ushas is the goddess of dawn, who is celebrated as a bringer of light, joy, and wealth. She is also linked to Indra, the king of gods and the god of thunder and rain.

Some examples of how light was used as a symbol in ancient Indian culture are:

- The Fire Altar: This was a symbol that represented the connection between the earthly and the heavenly realms. It was a structure that was built according to precise measurements and geometrical patterns. It was used to perform fire rituals, or yajnas, in which offerings of ghee, grains, and animals were made to various gods through Agni.
- The Gayatri Mantra: This was a symbol that represented the essence of the Vedas and the power of speech. It was a sacred verse that was recited by Brahmins, or priests, during their daily prayers. It praised Savitr as the source of light and wisdom, they asked for his guidance and illumination.
- The Swastika: This was a symbol that represented good luck and prosperity. It was a cross with four arms that bent at right angles. It symbolized the movement of the sun and the cycle of life. It was often drawn on doors, walls, pots, and coins.

The Ancient Chinese: The Yin-Yang Symbol

The ancient Chinese developed a system of thought that is based on the concept of yin-yang, or the balance and harmony of opposite forces in nature and life. Yin represents darkness, coldness, passivity and femininity. Yang represents lightness, warmth, activity and masculinity. The yin-yang symbol depicts a circle that is divided into two halves by a curved line. Each half contains a dot of the opposite color, indicating that nothing is absolute or pure. The symbol expresses the idea that everything is interconnected and interdependent, and that change is constant and cyclical. The symbol also implies that one should seek moderation and avoid extremes to achieve harmony.

Some examples of how light was used as a symbol in ancient Chinese culture are:

- The Eight Trigrams: These were symbols that represented the eight basic states of nature and human affairs. They were composed of three lines each, either solid or broken. Solid lines represented yang, while broken lines represented yin. The eight trigrams were arranged around the yin-yang symbol to form a diagram called the Bagua, which was used for divination and cosmology.
- The Five Elements: These were symbols that represented the five fundamental substances or energies that made up everything in the universe. They were wood, fire, earth, metal, and water. Each element had a corresponding color, direction, season, organ, and emotion. Wood was green, east, spring,- liver and anger. Fire was red, south, summer, heart, and joy. Earth was yellow, center, late summer, spleen, and worry. Metal was white, west, autumn, lung, and grief. Water was black, north, winter, kidney, and fear.
- The Lantern Festival: This was a symbol that represented the end of the lunar new year celebrations and the return of spring. It was held on the fifteenth day of the first lunar month when the moon was full. People would light lanterns of various shapes and colors and hang them on streets, temples, and houses. They would also solve riddles written on lanterns or release sky lanterns into the air.

These are a few examples of What Light Symbolized in Ancient Civilizations. Many of these Beliefs and Ideas are still relevant and a part of Modern Society. It still appears in many Modern Belief systems because it has been passed down through the Ages in things such as Religions and other Beliefs.

The End

Seeking Light

The word "light" has a profound and multifaceted meaning in Freemasonry. It is not only a physical phenomenon that illuminates the world, but also a symbol of knowledge, wisdom, and divine guidance. Freemasons are seekers of light, who strive to attain a deeper understanding of themselves, their fellow humans, and the Supreme Being.

One of the most striking moments in the initiation of a Freemason is when he receives the light for the first time. After being in a state of darkness, he is suddenly exposed to the brightness of the lodge and its symbols. This represents his transition from ignorance to enlightenment, from profanity to sacredness, from death to life. The light that he receives is not only the visible light of the lodge but also the symbolic light of Masonic teachings and values.

The light in Freemasonry has several sources and manifestations. One of them is the Great Light in Masonry, which is the Holy Bible or the sacred book of one's faith. It contains the revealed word of God and the moral law that guides the conduct of Freemasons. Another source of light is the Lesser Lights, which are three candles or lamps placed around the altar. They represent the sun, the moon, and the master of the lodge, who are the rulers of the day, the night, and the Masonic world respectively.

The light in Freemasonry also has a close connection with the sun, which is considered as the most glorious and powerful source of light in nature. The sun is a symbol of God, who is often called "the Great Architect of the Universe" or "the Grand Geometrician". The sun also represents life, warmth, energy, and intelligence. Many Masonic symbols are derived from or related to the sun, such as the blazing star, the eye of providence, and the square and compasses.

The blazing star is a prominent symbol in Freemasonry that appears on the mosaic pavement of the lodge. It is usually depicted as a five-pointed star with a glory or rays around it. It represents the divine providence that watches over and guides the Freemasons in their quest for light. It also signifies the Freemason who constantly seeks to perfect himself by acquiring knowledge and practicing virtue. The blazing star is sometimes associated with Sirius, which is the brightest star in the sky and was revered by ancient civilizations as a source of wisdom and inspiration.

The Square and Compasses

The Square and Compasses are perhaps the most recognizable symbols of Freemasonry. They are tools used by operative masons to measure and design buildings. In speculative Freemasonry, they are symbols of morality and science. The square teaches us to regulate our actions by the principles of justice and honesty. Compasses teach us to limit our desires by the boundaries of reason and virtue. Together, they form a lozenge or a diamond shape, which represents the union of matter and spirit, earth and heaven, and man and God.

The Eye of Providence

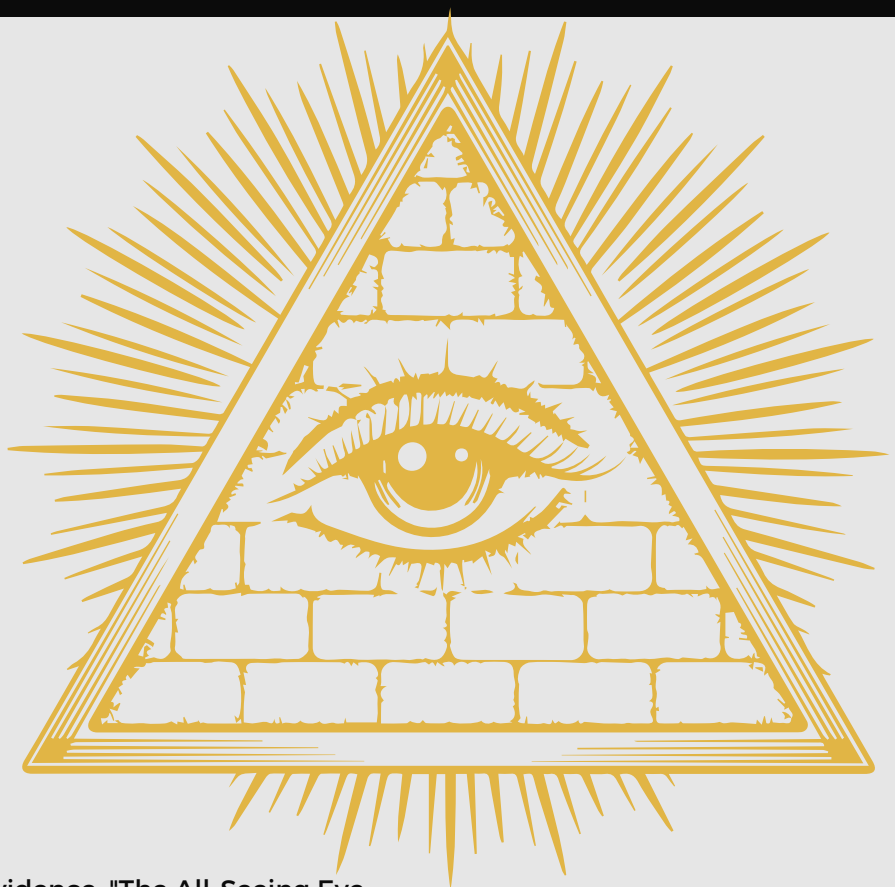
The eye of providence is another symbol that expresses the idea of God's omniscience and omnipresence. It is often shown as an eye within a triangle or a glory, surrounded by clouds or rays of light. It signifies that God sees everything that happens in his creation and cares for his creatures. The eye of providence is also a reminder of the accountability and responsibility that Freemasons have towards their actions and intentions.

The light in Freemasonry is not only a symbol but also a goal. Freemasons are expected to walk in the light and spread it to others. They are encouraged to study, learn, and improve themselves in various fields of knowledge and skills. They are also urged to practice charity, benevolence, and tolerance towards their fellow humans. By doing so, they hope to contribute to the enlightenment and betterment of humanity.

The light in Freemasonry is also a mystery that can never be fully comprehended or explained. It is a gift that can only be experienced by those who are worthy and prepared. It is a challenge that invites us to explore further and deeper into ourselves and our relationship with God. It is a journey that never ends.

To use more quotes in this Article, I have added some passages from Masonic sources that illustrate or support some of the points made above.

- On receiving light for the first time: "This Light is not merely material Light; it is far more; it is moral and spiritual Light; it is Light that Lighteth every man who cometh into this world; it is Light from above; it is Light Divine." (William Preston)
- On walking in light: "To walk in Light implies intelligence, it implies further that we know enough to guide us on our way; it implies still further that we have standards by which we can test our knowledge and by which we can measure our actions." (Joseph Fort Newton)
- On the sun as a symbol: "The Sun is the ancient symbol of the life-giving and generative power of the Deity. To the ancients, light was the cause of life, and God was the source from which all light flowed; the essence of Light, the Invisible Fire, developed as flame manifested as light and splendour." (Albert Mackey)
- On the blazing star: "The Blazing Star in our Lodges, we have already said, represents Sirius, Anubis, or Mercury, Guardian, and Guide of Souls. Our Ancient English brethren also considered it an emblem of the Sun. In the old lectures, they said: The Blazing Star or Glory in the centre refers us to that Grand Luminary the Sun, which enlightens the Earth, and by its genial influence dispenses blessings to mankind." (Albert Pike)



- On the eye of providence: "The All-Seeing Eye is one of the oldest hieroglyphics of the Deity. He who pervades all space and is intimately present in every part thereof is emphatically said to see everything; to be an Eye that never sleeps; an Eye to whom the darkness shineth as the light." (George Oliver)

- On the square and compasses: "The Square is a symbol of what is right and true; it is an emblem of virtue in its most comprehensive sense The Compasses are an emblem of wisdom. They teach us to circumscribe our desires and keep our passions within due bounds." (William Hutchinson)

The End

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LIGHT TO THE ROSICRUCIAN

Light is one of the most important and universal symbols in the Rosicrucian tradition. It represents the divine essence, the source of life, the manifestation of truth, and the goal of spiritual illumination. In this article, we will explore some of the meanings and applications of light in the Rosicrucian teachings, drawing from examples, explanations, and quotes from various public domain sources.

Light as the Divine Essence

The Rosicrucians believe that light is the primary substance of the universe, the emanation of God, and the basis of all creation. Everything that exists is composed of light in different degrees of density and vibration. Light is also the medium through which God communicates with humanity, and through which humans can commune with God.

One of the earliest sources of Rosicrucianism, the Secret Symbols of the Rosicrucians (1785-1788), states: "God is Light; Light is Life; Life is All. All things are made out of Light; all things live by Light; all things return to Light". This statement summarizes the Rosicrucian view of light as the origin and destiny of all beings.

Another source, The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception (1909) by Max Heindel, explains: "God is Light. That is axiomatic. But it must be understood that this light is not merely physical light, but a spiritual principle which pervades all space, and which may be said to be God Himself".

Some examples of how light is used as a symbol of the divine essence in Rosicrucianism are:-

- The rose on a cross, which is the emblem of the order, represents the union of human and divine nature, or the soul and spirit, through the power of light.
- The solar disk, which was adopted by some Rosicrucians as a symbol of God, represents the source of light and life for all creation.
- The alchemical process of transmutation, which aims to transform base metals into gold, symbolizes the purification and elevation of the soul by the light of God.

Light as the Source of Life

The Rosicrucians also believe that light is the vital force that animates all living things. Without light, there would be no life on Earth or anywhere else. Light is the energy that sustains and nourishes all forms of existence.

The Secret Symbols of the Rosicrucians says: "Life's light stands in the middle to point out to men the way to this first rest, and the Father in the heaven lets his Sun rise over good and evil". This implies that light is both a physical and a spiritual phenomenon, that it guides humans to their true purpose, and that it shines equally on all creatures.

The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception adds: "Light is life-giving. It is essential to plant growth; without it, they die. It also acts upon minerals; a photographic plate placed in a dark room will remain unchanged for years; but when exposed to light it will at once commence to change". This shows that light has a transformative effect on matter and that it is involved in all processes of growth and development.

Some examples of how light is used as a symbol of the source of life in Rosicrucianism are:

- The seven rays of light, which correspond to the seven planets and the seven colors of the rainbow, represent the different aspects and manifestations of life in nature.
- The aura is a luminous field that surrounds every living being. It reflects their health, emotions, thoughts, and spiritual development.
- The breath, which is a form of subtle light that enters and exits through the nostrils, regulates the vital functions and connects humans with their inner selves.

Light as the Manifestation of Truth

The Rosicrucians also believe that light is the expression of truth, wisdom, and knowledge. Light reveals what is hidden, clarifies what is obscure, and illuminates what is dark. Light is also the symbol of enlightenment, understanding, and awareness.

The Secret Symbols of the Rosicrucians states: "Light makes manifest; for nothing can be hidden before it". This means that light exposes reality as it is, without distortion or deception.

The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception says: "Light gives knowledge; without it, we cannot see anything; we grope about in darkness". This implies that light enables perception, cognition, and learning.

Some examples of how light is used as a symbol of the manifestation of truth in Rosicrucianism are:

- The eye, which is the organ of vision and the window of the soul, represents the faculty of discernment and intuition that allows humans to perceive the truth beyond appearances.
- The lamp, which is a device that produces artificial light, symbolizes the intellect and reason that help humans to acquire knowledge and solve problems.
- The star, which is a celestial body that emits light, signifies the inspiration and guidance that humans receive from their higher self and their spiritual teachers.

Light as the Goal of Spiritual Illumination

The Rosicrucians also believe that light is the aim of spiritual illumination, the attainment of divine consciousness, and the realization of one's true nature. Light is also the symbol of initiation, transformation, and transcendence.

The Secret Symbols of the Rosicrucians says: "Light makes blessed; for it leads to God". This suggests that light brings happiness, peace, and harmony to those who follow its path.

The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception says: "Light transmutes; when sufficiently strong it will consume all material things". This indicates that light purifies, elevates, and liberates those who receive its power.

Some examples of how light is used as a symbol of the goal of spiritual illumination in Rosicrucianism are:

- The flame, which is a visible manifestation of fire and light, represents the spirit and will that ignite humans to pursue their spiritual aspirations.
- The crown, which is a circular ornament worn on the head, symbolizes the achievement of mastery and sovereignty over oneself and one's destiny.
- The rose, which is a fragrant flower with many petals, signifies the unfolding of the soul and its blossoming into full awareness.

In conclusion, we have seen that light is a multifaceted symbol in the Rosicrucian tradition, representing various aspects of divinity, life, truth, and illumination. By studying and meditating on this symbol, we can deepen our understanding of ourselves and our relationship with the God of Our Hearts.

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Gnostics and Light

Gnosticism is a term that encompasses a variety of religious and philosophical movements that emerged in the first centuries of the Common Era. These movements shared a common belief that the material world is a prison created by a false god and that the true God is hidden in the realm of light. The goal of the Gnostic is to escape from the bondage of ignorance and matter and to return to the divine light.

Light is one of the most prominent symbols used by the Gnostics to express their worldview. Light represents knowledge, wisdom, salvation, and the divine spark that dwells within every human being. In contrast, darkness represents ignorance, evil, sin, and the material world that traps the soul.

In this article, we will explore some of the ways that light is used as a symbol in Gnostic texts and traditions. We will look at some examples of how light is associated with:

- The true God and his emanations
- The Gnostic savior figures
- The Gnostic scriptures and teachings
- The Gnostic rituals and practices
- The Gnostic vision of the end times

We will also provide some sources for further reading and research on these topics.

The True God and His Emanations

The Gnostics believed that the true God is ineffable, transcendent, and beyond all description. He is the source of all light and life and emanates various aspects of himself into lower realms. These emanations are often called aeons, and they form a hierarchy of divine beings that constitute the Pleroma, or the fullness of God.

One of the most important aeons is Sophia or Wisdom. She is often depicted as a female figure who represents the highest form of knowledge and insight. However, in some Gnostic myths, Sophia falls from her original place in the Pleroma and creates a flawed copy of the divine realm. This copy is called the Demiurge, or the false god, who in turn creates the material world and enslaves humanity.

The Gnostics identified the Demiurge with the God of the Hebrew Bible, who they considered to be ignorant, arrogant, and cruel. They also associated him with darkness, fire, and chaos. The Demiurge claims to be the only God and forbids humanity from seeking the true God and his light.

Some sources on the topic are.

The Secret Book of John: A Gnostic text that narrates the creation of the world by Sophia and the Demiurge. It also describes the Pleroma and its aeons.

- The Apocryphon of John: A Commentary by Karen L. King: A scholarly commentary on The Secret Book of John that explains its historical context, literary structure, theological themes, and symbolic meanings.
- The Gnostic Bible: Revised and Expanded Edition edited by Willis Barnstone and Marvin Meyer: A collection of primary sources on Gnosticism that includes translations of various texts on cosmology, mythology, ethics, and eschatology.

Gnostics and Light continued...

The Gnostic Savior Figures

The Gnostics believed that the true God sends various savior figures to reveal his light and to help humanity escape from the Demiurge's tyranny. These savior figures are often called Christ, or Logos, which means Word or Reason. They are also sometimes identified with other religious figures, such as Buddha, Zoroaster, or Hermes.

The most prominent savior figure for many Gnostics was Jesus Christ. They believed that he was an aeon who descended from Pleroma into the material world. He took on a human appearance, but he did not have a physical body. He taught his followers the secret knowledge (gnosis) that would enable them to recognize their true nature as sparks of light trapped in matter.

The Gnostics also believed that Jesus Christ performed various signs and wonders to demonstrate his authority over the Demiurge and his powers. He healed the sick, raised the dead, cast out demons, and walked on water. He also revealed his true glory to some of his disciples in a transfiguration event, where he shone like a bright star.

The Gnostics had different views on the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Some believed that he did not die on the cross but only appeared to do so. Others believed that he did die on the cross, but only his physical body was destroyed. His spiritual body rose from the dead on the third day, and he appeared to his followers in a luminous form.

Some sources on this topic are:

- **The Gospel of Thomas: A collection of 114 sayings attributed to Jesus Christ. Some of these sayings emphasize his role as a bringer of light and knowledge. For example: "I am the light that is over all things. I am all: from me, all came forth, and to me all attained. Split a piece of wood; I am there. Lift up the stone, and you will find me there." (Saying 77)**
- **The Gospel of Judas: A dialogue between Jesus Christ and Judas Iscariot, who is portrayed as his favorite disciple. Jesus Christ reveals to Judas the secrets of the Pleroma and the Demiurge and asks him to betray him to the authorities. He tells him: "You will exceed all of them. For you will sacrifice the man that clothes me." (Chapter 56)**
- **The Pistis Sophia: A lengthy text that describes the fall and restoration of Sophia, and the teachings of Jesus Christ after his resurrection. He explains to his disciples the mysteries of the light and the aeons, and how to ascend to the Pleroma. He also gives them various prayers and rituals to perform.**

- The Gnostic Gospels by Elaine Pagels: A classic book that explores the diversity and richness of early Christian thought, based on the discovery of the Nag Hammadi library in 1945. It examines how the Gnostics understood Jesus Christ, his teachings, his death, and his resurrection.

The Gnostic Scriptures and Teachings

The Gnostics produced a large number of scriptures and teachings that expressed their views on light and other topics. These texts were often written in Greek or Coptic, and they used various literary genres such as gospels, apocalypses, dialogues, hymns, and letters. Some of these texts were attributed to Jesus Christ himself or his apostles. They claimed to contain his secret teachings that were not recorded in the canonical gospels. They also claimed to reveal his Real Identity being an aeon. Who came from the Pleroma.

Some sources on this topic are:

- The Nag Hammadi Library: A collection of 13 codices that contain 52 texts on various aspects of Gnosticism. It was discovered in 1945 near the town of Nag Hammadi in Egypt. It includes texts such as The Gospel of Thomas, The Gospel of Philip, The Gospel of Truth, The Apocryphon of John, The Secret Book of James, The Treatise on the Resurrection, and many others.
- The Nag Hammadi Scriptures: The Revised and Updated Translation of Sacred Gnostic Texts edited by Marvin Meyer: A comprehensive edition of the Nag Hammadi library that provides new translations, introductions, notes, and commentaries for each text.
- Gnosis: The Nature and History of Gnosticism by Kurt Rudolph: A comprehensive survey of the origins, development, doctrines, and literature of Gnosticism. It covers topics such as Jewish and Christian influences, dualism, cosmology, anthropology, soteriology, and ethics.

The Gnostic Rituals and Practices

The Gnostics practiced various rituals and practices that aimed to connect them with the light and to prepare them for their salvation. These rituals and practices included:

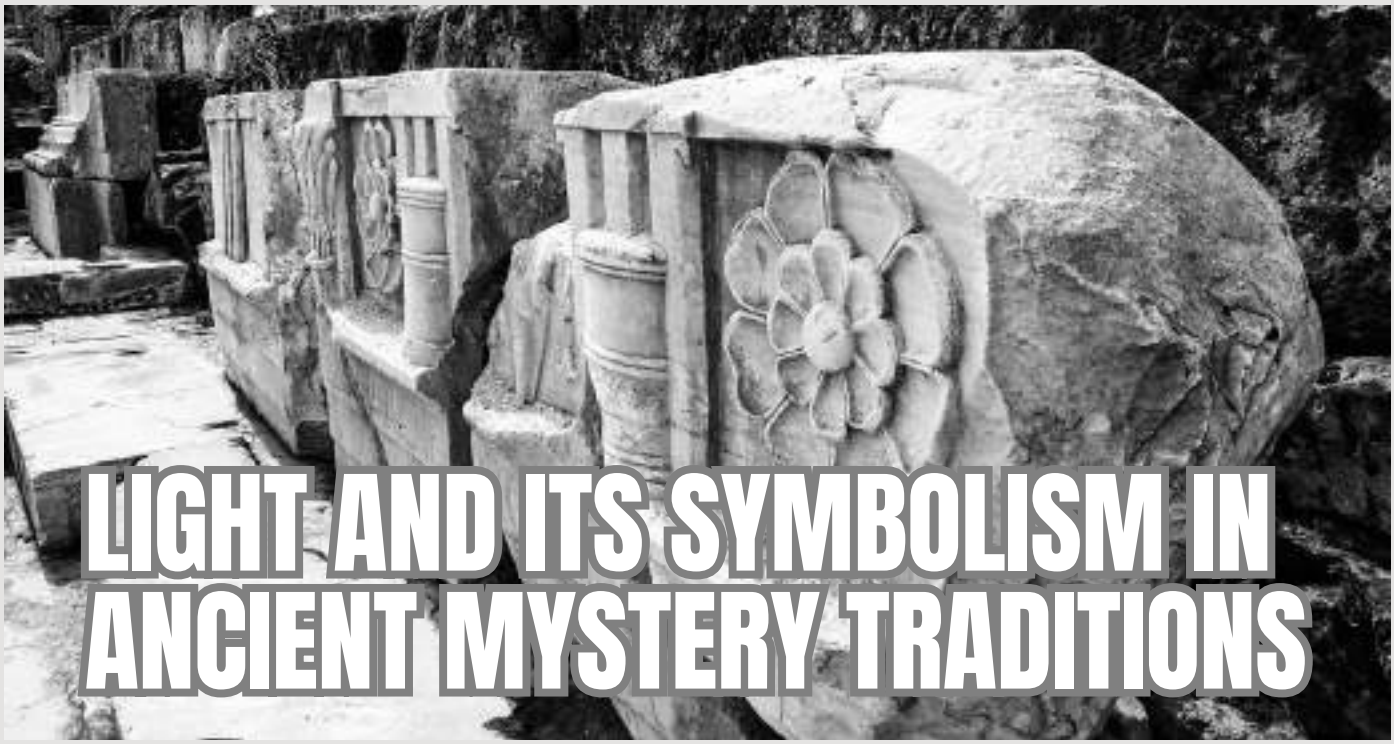
- Baptism: A rite of initiation that symbolized the washing away of sins and the rebirth into a new life. The Gnostics believed that baptism conferred on them the holy spirit, or the light-power, that would guide them to gnosis.
- Eucharist: A rite of communion that symbolized the sharing of the body and blood of Christ. The Gnostics believed that eucharist gave them access to the spiritual substance of Christ, which would nourish their souls and protect them from evil.

- Anointing: A rite of consecration that symbolized the sealing of the soul with the light. The Gnostics believed that anointing granted them a special status as elect or chosen ones, who would inherit the kingdom of God.
- Meditation: A practice of contemplation that aims to quiet the mind and to focus on the inner light. The Gnostics believed that meditation enabled them to experience visions, revelations, and mystical union with God.
- Asceticism: A practice of self-discipline that involves abstaining from worldly pleasures and passions. The Gnostics believed that asceticism helped them to detach from the material world and to purify their souls.

Some sources on this topic are:

- Rethinking Gnosticism: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category by Michael Allen Williams: A critical examination of the concept of Gnosticism as a distinct religious category. It challenges some common assumptions about Gnostic rituals and practices and argues for a more nuanced and contextualized approach.
- Ritual Texts for the Afterlife: Orpheus and the Bacchic Gold Tablets by Fritz Graf and Sarah Iles Johnston: A study of ancient Greek texts inscribed on gold tablets that were buried with the dead. These texts contain instructions for navigating the underworld and reaching a blessed state.

The End



LIGHT AND ITS SYMBOLISM IN ANCIENT MYSTERY TRADITIONS

Light is a universal symbol of many positive meanings, such as guidance, life, hope, morality, truth, joy, and divinity. Across different cultures and religions, light has been associated with sacred stories, rituals, and practices that reveal its spiritual significance. In this article, we will explore some examples of how light and its symbolism were used in ancient mystery traditions, which were secretive cults that offered their initiates a personal experience of the divine and a promise of a better afterlife.

One of the most famous and ancient mystery traditions was the Eleusinian Mysteries, which were based on the myth of Demeter and Persephone. Demeter was the goddess of agriculture and fertility, and Persephone was her daughter who was abducted by Hades, the god of the underworld. Demeter searched for her daughter in vain, and in her grief, she caused a famine on earth. Zeus intervened and ordered Hades to return Persephone, but he tricked her into eating some pomegranate seeds before leaving, which bound her to spend part of the year in the underworld as his wife and the rest with her mother. This myth explained the cycle of nature and the seasons.

The Eleusinian Mysteries consisted of two stages: the Lesser Mysteries, which were held in spring and prepared the candidates for initiation, and the Greater Mysteries, which were held in autumn and involved a series of rites at Eleusis, a town near Athens. The most important and secretive part of the Greater Mysteries was the epopteia, or the revelation, which took place in a dark hall called the Telesterion. There, the initiates witnessed a sacred drama that reenacted the myth of Demeter and Persephone, accompanied by lights, sounds, and objects that symbolized their story. The climax of the epopteia was the display of a single ear of grain, which represented the gift of Demeter to humanity and the hope of eternal life.

Another example of an ancient mystery tradition that used light symbolism was Mithraism, which was popular among Roman soldiers and officials from the first to the fourth centuries CE. Mithraism was based on the worship of Mithras, a Persian god who was identified with the sun and who killed a sacred bull as an act of creation. Mithras was also seen as a mediator between humans and the supreme god Ahura Mazda, who represented light and truth.

Mithraism had seven grades of initiation, each associated with a planet and a set of symbols. The initiates met in underground temples called mithraea, which were designed to resemble caves. The mithraea were dimly lit by torches or lamps, creating a contrast between light and darkness that symbolized the struggle between good and evil. The central cult image in every Mithraeum was a relief or sculpture depicting Mithras killing the bull, surrounded by other figures and symbols that related to his myth.

A third example of an ancient mystery tradition that employed light symbolism was Gnosticism, which was a diverse movement of esoteric sects that emerged in the first centuries CE. Gnosticism derived its name from gnosis, or knowledge, which was the goal of its adherents. Gnostics believed that humans had a divine spark within them that was trapped in a material world created by an evil or ignorant demiurge. To liberate their souls from this prison, they sought to acquire secret knowledge from various sources, such as scriptures, visions, or revelations from heavenly beings.

Gnostics used light as a metaphor for their spiritual quest and their ultimate destination. They often referred to themselves as "the children of light" or "the elect of light". They also used light imagery to describe their cosmology and their savior figures. For example, some Gnostic texts depict Jesus as a luminous being who descended from the pleroma, or the fullness of light, to impart gnosis to his followers.

A Fourth Example is The Orphic Mysteries

Light is a central concept in Orphism, a Hellenistic mystery religion based on the teachings and songs of the legendary Greek musician Orpheus. Orphism was a mystical and esoteric movement that offered a path to spiritual enlightenment and liberation from the cycle of reincarnation.

One of the main symbols of Orphism is the Orphic Egg, which represents the primordial source of all creation. According to Orphic cosmogony, the creator of the universe is Phanes, a radiant deity whose name means "the light-bringer" or "the shining one". Phanes is born from the Orphic Egg, which is surrounded by a serpent,

symbolizing the cosmic force of life. Phanes have glittering golden wings and four eyes that see in all directions. He is also called Protogonos (The First-begotten) and Erikepaios (The Powerful One). He is the father of all gods and the origin of all life.

Another aspect of light in Orphism is the role of Orpheus himself, who is considered to be a son of Apollo, the god of light, music, and prophecy. Orpheus is famous for his lyre, which he uses to charm animals, plants, rocks, and even the underworld gods. He is also a poet and a prophet, who reveals the secrets of the divine order and the fate of the soul. Orpheus teaches his followers how to purify themselves from their sins and how to achieve immortality through initiation into his mysteries.

Orphism also emphasizes the contrast between light and darkness, life and death, spirit and matter. The Orphics believe that the human soul is divine and immortal, but trapped in a material body that is subject to decay and suffering. The soul has to undergo many cycles of reincarnation until it can free itself from the bonds of flesh and return to its source of light. The Orphic practice various rituals, such as abstaining from meat and wine, wearing white garments, offering sacrifices and hymns to the gods, and performing secret rites that involve symbolic death and rebirth.

These are just some of the many examples of how light and its symbolism were used in ancient mystery traditions. Light was not only a physical phenomenon but also a powerful symbol that expressed various aspects of human spirituality: guidance, life, hope, morality, truth, joy, and divinity.

The End

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PART 2: LIGHT IN RELIGIONS

LIGHT IN THE RELIGION OF BUDDHISM

Light is one of the most universal and fundamental symbols in Buddhism. It represents the spiritual and the divine, the illumination and intelligence, the source of goodness, and the ultimate reality. Light also accompanies transcendence into the Nirvana of Buddhist doctrine, and it is the avenger of evil forces and darkness. In this article, we will explore some of the scripture examples, explanations, and quotes that illustrate the significance of light in Buddhism.

Light as a Symbol of Enlightenment

One of the most common ways that light is used as a symbol in Buddhism is to represent the state of enlightenment or awakening. Enlightenment is the goal of Buddhist practice, and it means to realize the true nature of reality and to free oneself from ignorance, attachment, and suffering. Enlightenment is often described as a light that dispels the darkness of ignorance and reveals the truth.

For example, in the Dhammapada, a collection of sayings attributed to the Buddha, we find this verse:

"The one who has transcended fear,
Who is free from craving and attachment,
Who has plucked out the thorns of existence -
For that one, this is the last body.
That one has attained unshakable wisdom.
This is one's last birth.
That one has gone beyond sorrow."

The commentary on this verse explains that "the thorns of existence" are the defilements that obscure the light of wisdom, and that "this is the last body" means that one has attained final liberation and will not be reborn again. The commentary also says that "gone beyond sorrow" means that one has reached Nirvana, which is "the extinction of all defilements and suffering".

Another example is from the Udana, a collection of inspired utterances by the Buddha and his disciples. In one story, a monk named Bahiya asks the Buddha to briefly teach him the Dharma. The Buddha replies:

"Then, Bahiya, you should train yourself thus: About the seen, there will be only the seen. In reference to the heard, only the heard. In reference to the sensed, only the sensed. In reference to the cognized, only the cognized. That is how you should train yourself. When for you there will be only the seen in reference to the seen, only the heard in reference to the heard, only the sensed in reference to the sensed, only the cognized in reference to the cognized, then, Bahiya, there is no you in connection with that.-

When there is no you in connection with that, there is no you there. When there is no you there, you are neither here nor yonder nor between the two. This, just this, is the end of stress."

The commentary on this passage explains that "the seen" refers to visible forms, "the heard" refers to sounds, "the sensed" refers to smells, tastes, and tactile sensations, and "the cognized" refers to mental phenomena. The Buddha teaches Bahiya to see these phenomena as they are, without adding any personal or subjective interpretations or projections onto them. By doing so, Bahiya will realize that no self or ego owns or experiences these phenomena,
and that they are impermanent and dependently arisen. This realization will lead him to Nirvana, which is "the end of stress".

As soon as Bahiya hears these words from the Buddha, he attains enlightenment. However, shortly after that, he is killed by a cow. The Buddha then declares:

"Indeed, Bahiya was wise. He practiced according to my instructions. He removed the veil of ignorance."

The commentary says that "the veil of ignorance" is another name for darkness or delusion, which prevents one from seeing things as they are. By removing this veil with the light of wisdom, Bahiya attained enlightenment.

A third example is from the Lotus Sutra, one of the most influential Mahayana Buddhist scriptures. In this sutra, a bodhisattva named Sadaparibhuta (Never Despise) vows to respect all beings as potential buddhas by bowing to them and saying:

"I do not despise you, for you will all become buddhas. You will all attain supreme enlightenment and expound the wonderful Dharma."

However, people mocked him and abused him for his strange behavior. He endures this patiently for many lifetimes until he meets Shakyamuni Buddha, who praises him and reveals his past lives as a Buddha named Tamalapatracandana (Sandalwood Fragrance). The Buddha then says:

"Sadaparibhuta, you have already offered alms to immeasurable buddhas
And planted the roots of virtue. You have always upheld the true Dharma
And never despised any being. Therefore, you have attained this body, Which is pure and wonderful, adorned with the marks of a great man, and emitting a brilliant light."

The commentary on this passage explains that "this body" refers to the Buddha's body, which is the result of his countless merits and virtues. The commentary also says that "a brilliant light" refers to the Buddha's wisdom and compassion, which radiate from his body and illuminate all beings.

Light as a Symbol of Compassion

Another way that light is used as a symbol in Buddhism is to represent compassion or loving-kindness. Compassion is one of the four sublime states (brahmacharya) that Buddhists cultivate as part of their ethical practice. Compassion means to feel empathy for others who are suffering and to wish them to be free from suffering.

For example, in the Karaniya Metta Sutta (Discourse on Loving-Kindness), a popular Buddhist text recited for protection and blessing, we find this verse:

- "Just as a mother would protect her only child
- With her own life
- Even so, towards all living beings
- One should cultivate a boundless heart."

The commentary on this verse explains that "a boundless heart" means a heart that is filled with loving-kindness, which is like a light that radiates in all directions and dispels the darkness of hatred and ill will.

Another example is from the Amitabha Sutra, one of the main scriptures of Pure Land Buddhism. In this sutra, the Buddha describes the western pure land of Amitabha Buddha, who is also known as Amitayus (Infinite Life) or Amitalokeshvara (Infinite Light). The Buddha says:

- "In that land there is no night or darkness.
- It is always bright because of the light
- That shines from Amitabha's body.
- The beings born there are also luminous.
- They have no afflictions or sufferings.
- They are always happy and peaceful."

The commentary on this passage explains that "the light that shines from Amitabha's body" is the manifestation of his great compassion and wisdom, which pervade his pure land and benefit all beings. The commentary also says that "the beings born there are also luminous" because they have received Amitabha's light and have purified their minds from all defilements.

A third example is from the Vimalakirti Sutra, another important Mahayana Buddhist scripture. In this sutra, a layman named Vimalakirti, who is secretly a bodhisattva of great wisdom and power, teaches the Dharma to various disciples and bodhisattvas. At one point, he performs a miracle by emitting a ray of light from his forehead, which illuminates countless Buddha lands in all directions. He then says:

- "Good men, this ray of light
- Is the power of the Buddha's compassion.
- It can illuminate all things
- And reveal their true nature.
- It can purify all worlds
- And make them like pure lands.
- It can awaken all beings
- And inspire them to seek enlightenment."

The commentary on this passage explains that "the power of the Buddhas' compassion" is the motivation behind all their actions and teachings. The commentary also says that "their true nature" refers to the emptiness or interdependence of all phenomena, which is the ultimate reality taught by the Buddhas.

Light is a powerful and profound symbol in Buddhism, with multiple meanings and applications. It can represent enlightenment, compassion, wisdom, purity, goodness, reality, and transcendence. It can also be used as a metaphor, a simile, an analogy, a device, a tool, a method, a practice, a goal, and a result. Light is both a means and an end in Buddhism, and it is one of the most inspiring and uplifting symbols for Buddhists of all traditions and schools.

In this article, we have explored some of the scripture examples, explanations, and quotes that illustrate the significance of light in Buddhism. We have seen how light symbolizes enlightenment as the state of awakening to the true nature of reality and freeing oneself from ignorance and suffering. We have also seen how light symbolizes compassion as the feeling of empathy for others who are suffering and wishing them to be free from suffering. We have also seen how light symbolizes wisdom as the understanding of emptiness or interdependence of all phenomena. We have also seen how light symbolizes purity as the absence of defilements or impurities in one's mind. We have also seen how light symbolizes goodness as the quality of being virtuous or moral. We have also seen how light symbolizes reality.

The End

Light is a powerful symbol in the Bible that represents God's presence, goodness, truth, holiness, and salvation. It also contrasts with darkness, which symbolizes evil, sin, and judgment. We are going to explore some of the scriptural examples and theological explanations of the meaning and significance of light in Christianity.

Light in Creation

The first thing that God created was light. In Genesis 1:3-4, we read:

“And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness.

This shows that light is essential for life and order in the world. It also shows that God is the source of light and that he evaluates his creation as good. Light reveals God's power and creativity.

Some other examples of light in creation are:

- The sun, moon, and stars that God made to separate day and night and to mark seasons and signs (Genesis 1:14-18).
- The rainbow that God set in the sky as a sign of his covenant with Noah and all living creatures after the flood (Genesis 9:12-17).
- The fire that God sent from heaven to consume the sacrifices of Abel (Genesis 4:4), Abraham (Genesis 15:17), and Elijah (1 Kings 18:38).

Some quotes from theologians and scholars about light in creation are:

- "Light is the first work of God in creation; it is also his first word. It is not only a physical reality but also a spiritual one. It is not only a natural phenomenon but also a supernatural one. It is not only a creaturely gift but also a divine gift." - John Stott
- "Light is the most basic condition of life. Without it there can be no sight; without sight, there can be no perception; without perception, there can be no intelligent life." - Gordon Wenham
- "Light is not only an element of creation but also an attribute of the Creator. It expresses his glory, his holiness, his truth, his love." - J.I. Packer

Light in Revelation

Light is also a way that God reveals himself to his people. Throughout the Old Testament, we see examples of God appearing in the form of light, such as the burning bush (Exodus 3:2), the pillar of fire (Exodus 13:21), and the glory cloud (Exodus 40:34). These manifestations show God's presence, guidance, and protection for his people.

In the New Testament, we see that Jesus Christ is the ultimate revelation of God's light. He declares himself to be "the light of the world" (John 8:12) who came to enlighten everyone (John 1:9). He also performs miracles that involve light, such as healing a blind man (John 9:5) and transfiguring before his disciples (Matthew 17:2). These actions show Jesus' authority and identity as the Son of God.

Some other examples of light in revelation are:

- The star that led the wise men to Bethlehem where Jesus was born (Matthew 2:1-12).
- The voice from heaven that affirmed Jesus as God's beloved Son at his baptism (Matthew 3:16-17) and transfiguration (Matthew 17:5).
- The angel that rolled away the stone from Jesus' tomb and shone like lightning (Matthew 28:2-4).

Some quotes from theologians and scholars about light in revelation are:

- "Jesus Christ is not only a messenger from God; he is himself God's message. He does not merely bring us truth; he himself is truth. He does not merely show us light; he himself is light." - Leon Morris
- "The incarnation was like a great burst of light into a dark world. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. And we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father." - D.A. Carson

Light in Salvation

Light is also a metaphor for salvation in the Bible. It represents what God does for us when he rescues us from sin and darkness. For example, Psalm 27:1 says:

"The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?"

This shows that God delivers us from fear and danger by his light. He also gives us hope and joy by his light. Isaiah 9:2 says:
"I have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned."

This prophecy refers to the coming of Jesus Christ, who brings peace and justice to a dark world. He also invites us to share in his light by believing in him and following him. John 12:46 says:

"I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness."

This shows that Jesus transforms our lives by his light. He also calls us to be lights in the world by reflecting his character and message. Matthew 5:14-16 says:
"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

This shows that Christians are called to be witnesses of God's light by their words and deeds. They are also called to worship God with lights, such as candles and lamps, as symbols of their devotion and gratitude.

Some other examples of light in salvation are:

- The lamp that God prepared for David and his descendants, who would rule as kings over Israel (2 Samuel 22:29; Psalm 132:17).
- The light that shone around Saul when he encountered the risen Christ on the road to Damascus, which led to his conversion and calling as an apostle (Acts 9:3-6).
- The armor of light that Paul exhorts Christians to put on as they live in a dark and evil age (Romans 13:12).

Some quotes from theologians and scholars about light in salvation are:

- "Salvation is not only a change of status but also a change of nature. It is not only a legal declaration but also a moral transformation. It is not only a pardon from sin but also a power over sin." - John Piper
- "Salvation is not only a gift from God but also a response from us. It is not only a divine initiative but also a human responsibility. It is not only a matter of faith but also of works." - James Dunn
- "Salvation is not only an individual experience but also a communal reality. It is not only a personal relationship but also a social involvement. It is not only a vertical dimension but also a horizontal one." - John Stott

The End

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THE ONLY TRUE LIGHT

Sikhism, a religion founded in the 15th century in the Punjab region of India, is based on the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji and subsequent Sikh Gurus. At its core, Sikhism promotes the belief in one God and emphasizes the importance of leading a truthful and righteous life. The principles of Sikhism are outlined in the Guru Granth Sahib, the central religious scripture of the Sikhs. In this article, we will explore the profound significance of light in Sikh scripture and how it metaphorically represents various aspects of Sikh spirituality and enlightenment.

Light is a recurring theme in the Guru Granth Sahib, as it symbolizes the divine presence, wisdom, guidance, and grace of God. The word "light" appears more than 500 times in the scripture, often in conjunction with other terms such as "lamp", "flame", "sun", "moon", "star", and "ray". The concept of light is used to describe the nature of God, the relationship between God and creation, the path of devotion, and the goal of liberation.

One of the most fundamental teachings of Sikhism is that God is the Only True Light, and everything else is a reflection or manifestation of that light. God is also called Jot (ਜੋਤ), which means "the essence" or "the soul". The opening verse of the Guru Granth Sahib declares:

ੲੇਕੋ ਅੰਕਾਰ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ
ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

One Universal Creator God. The Name Is Truth. Creative Being Personified. No Fear. No Hatred. Image Of The Undying. Beyond Birth. Self-Existent. By Guru's Grace ~

This verse affirms that God is one, eternal, transcendent, immanent, and gracious. It also implies that God is the source of all existence, and that everything emanates from God's light. The Guru Granth Sahib further states:

ਜੋ ਤੁਧੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਸੋ ਥੀਐ ਤੂੰ ਹੀ ਹੋਇ ਸੁ ਹੋਇ ॥

Whatever pleases You comes to pass. You Yourself are everything that happens. ~

This means that God is not only the creator but also the sustainer and destroyer of all phenomena. Nothing happens without God's will or consent. Everything is a manifestation of God's light.

The concept of light also implies that God is not limited by any form, shape, color, or gender. God is beyond any human conception or description.

Meditation is the process of focusing one's mind on the Name of God and His attributes, as revealed in the Guru Granth Sahib. Sikhs believe that by meditating on God's Name, they can connect with His presence and receive His grace. The Guru Granth Sahib states that "the Name is the Light; through it one sees the Lord" (page 1084). Meditation is also a way of purifying one's mind from worldly distractions and attachments, attaining inner peace and harmony.

Light is a metaphor that describes both the object and the outcome of meditation. On one hand, light represents God Himself, who is the source and sustainer of all creation. By meditating on His Name, Sikhs can experience His light within themselves and around them. On the other hand, light signifies the spiritual illumination that meditation brings to one's mind and soul. By meditating on His Name, Sikhs can dispel the darkness of ignorance, egoism, attachment, and sin, and realize their True identity as a part of God.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji is the founder and first Guru of Sikhism. He was born in 1469 in a village near Lahore, now in Pakistan. He had a spiritual awakening at a young age and began to travel across India and beyond, preaching his message of love, equality, and devotion to God. He composed many hymns and poems that expressed his vision of God and His creation. These hymns are included in the Guru Granth Sahib, along with those of other Sikh Gurus and saints.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji is the role model and guide for Sikhs who want to meditate on God's Name and light. He taught that meditation is the highest form of worship and that it can be done by anyone, regardless of their caste, gender, or religion. He said that "The true Guru has shown me this way: that I may chant the Name of the Lord, Har, Har, while I walk, stand or sit" (page 938). He also demonstrated how to meditate on God's light by using various metaphors and examples. For instance, he said "the sun is one; its rays are many; so is the Lord; His light fills all" (page 663).

By following Guru Nanak Dev Ji's teachings and example, Sikhs can learn how to meditate on God's Name and light effectively and sincerely. They can also experience the benefits of meditation, such as peace, joy, wisdom, and grace. They can also realize their True Identity as a part of God's light, and merge with Him in bliss.

Sikh scripture quotes with light in them and their explanations:

- "The One Lord is the Light of all." (Guru Granth Sahib, page 13) This quote expresses the belief that God is the source of all illumination and enlightenment and that there is no other light besides Him. It is a statement of faith and devotion, as well as a reminder of the unity and oneness of God. The quote also implies that all creation reflects God's light and that we should respect and love all beings as manifestations of the divine. The quote also suggests that the only way to attain true knowledge and wisdom is to connect with God's light within ourselves and to follow His will and guidance. The quote is one of the many verses in the Guru Granth Sahib that praise and glorify God as the ultimate reality and the supreme teacher.
- One of the core teachings of Sikhism is that God is not separate from His creation but pervades it and dwells within every being. This is expressed in the following verse from the Guru Granth Sahib, the holy scripture of the Sikhs: "The Divine Light is within everyone; You are that Light." (Guru Granth Sahib, page 13) This quote reveals the concept of immanence, which means that God is not transcendent or distant, but imminent and accessible. It also inspires the seeker to recognize their true nature as a manifestation of God's light.

One of the most beautiful verses in the Guru Granth Sahib, the sacred scripture of the Sikhs, is this one: "The Lord's Name is a lamp, which illumines the three worlds." (Guru Granth Sahib, page 29) It expresses the reverence and devotion that the Sikhs have for the name of God, which they believe can grant them spiritual enlightenment and freedom from the cycle of birth and death. The three worlds that are illuminated by God's name are the earthly realm, where humans and animals live; the heavenly realm, where gods and angels dwell; and the underworld, where demons and ghosts reside. By chanting God's name, the Sikhs hope to transcend these three worlds and attain union with the Supreme Being.

- "My lamp is the Guru; He has illuminated me with his brilliance." (Guru Granth Sahib, page 230) This quote conveys appreciation and respect for the Guru, who is regarded as a reflection of God's light and wisdom. The Guru dispels the darkness of ignorance with his teachings and guidance.

- "As long as there is breath in my body, I shall meditate on Your Name; Your Light fills my mind." (Guru Granth Sahib, page 263) This quote is an expression of a Sikh's love and dedication to God's name, which is considered a way of meditating. By reciting God's name, a Sikh feels the presence of God's light in their mind, which gives them peace and happiness. This quote reflects the Sikh belief that God is the source of life and the Ultimate Goal of human existence.

- "The Lord has infused His Light into every heart; He Himself is pervading everywhere." (Guru Granth Sahib, page 599) This quote expresses the belief that God is present and powerful in all of creation. He has given His own light to every heart, and He is everywhere. This means that God is not distant or separate from His creation, but rather He is intimately involved and accessible. One can discover God in one's own heart by turning inward and recognizing His light.

- "The True Guru has shown me this wonder: The Lord's Light shines in each and every heart." (Guru Granth Sahib, page 646) This quote is a passage that explains the meaning of a verse from the-

the Guru Granth Sahib, the holy scripture of Sikhism. The verse says that the True Guru, who is the spiritual guide and teacher of the Sikhs, has taught them a wonderful thing: that God's light is present in every person's heart. This means that God is not far away or separate from His creation, but He is within everyone and everything. This also implies that all people are equal and valuable in God's eyes, regardless of their differences.

- "In every heart, my Lord dwells; He is pervading everywhere. He is both near and far; He is all-pervading. He is both manifest and hidden; He is both light and dark." (Guru Granth Sahib, page 731) This quote expresses the mysterious nature of God, who is beyond all human concepts and distinctions. It also confirms that God can be found in everything and nothing can be separated from Him.

Sikhism is not as Old as some Religions, but it is a Religion full of Wisdom and Righteous ways. Hope you learned something useful. Keep Seeking! You Will Find!

THE END

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ALLAH GUIDES TO HIS LIGHT WHOM HE WILLS

Light is a significant concept in Islam, as it is associated with God, guidance, knowledge, and mercy. In this article, we will explore the meaning and symbolism of light in Islam, and how we can apply it in our lives. We will also provide some examples and quotes from the Quran, Hadiths, and Sunnah that illustrate the importance of light in Islam.

The Quranic Concept of Light

The Quran uses the term "nur" (light) in various ways, but the most famous verse that mentions light is known as the Verse of Light (Ayat al-Nur):

"Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His light is like a niche within which is a lamp, the lamp is within glass, the glass as if it were a pearly [white] star lit from [the oil of] a blessed olive tree, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil would almost glow even if untouched by fire. Light upon light. Allah guides to His light whom He wills. And Allah presents examples for the people, and Allah is Knowing of all things." (Quran 24:35)

This verse is a beautiful parable that describes God's light as transcendent, pure, radiant and illuminating. It also implies that God's light is the source of all other lights, and that He bestows His light upon those whom He chooses. The verse also suggests that God's light is beyond human comprehension, as it is neither of the east nor of the west, and it does not need any external source to shine.

The Quran also uses light as a metaphor for guidance, faith, and good deeds. For example:

"O you who have believed, fear Allah and believe in His Messenger; He will [then] give you a double portion of His mercy and make for you a light by which you will walk and forgive you; and Allah is Forgiving and Merciful." (Quran 57:28)

The Quran also contrasts light with darkness, as symbols of truth and falsehood, guidance and misguidance, salvation and doom. For example:

"Allah is the ally of those who believe. He brings them out from darkness into the light. And those who disbelieve - their allies are Taghut. They take them out of the light into darkness. Those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide eternally therein." (Quran 2:257)

"And to Allah belongs the east and the west. So wherever you [might] turn, there is the Face of Allah . Indeed, Allah is all-encompassing and Knowing." (Quran 2:115)

"Or [is he] like darkness in a vast deep sea, overwhelmed with a great wave topped by a great wave, topped by dark clouds, darkness upon darkness? If a man stretches out his hand, he can hardly see it! And he for whom Allah has not appointed light - for him there is no light." (Quran 24:40)

The Hadiths and Sunnah on Light

The Hadiths are the sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), which are recorded by his companions and followers. The Sunnah is the way or example of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), which Muslims are encouraged to follow.

The Hadiths and Sunnah also contain many references to light, especially in relation to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) himself, his family and his companions. Some examples are:

- The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "I was sent from the best of generations of Adam's offspring until the last of them. And I was created from a handful taken from all of them." And he struck his chest with his hand and said: "I am this handful." And he pointed to his mouth and said: "And I am this mouthful." And he pointed to his heart and said: "And I am this heartful." And he pointed to his forehead and said: "And I am this foreheadful." And he pointed to his eyes and said: "And I am these eyesful." And he pointed to his ears and said: "And I am these earsful." And he pointed to his hands and said: "And I am these handfuls." And he pointed to his feet and said: "And I am these feetful." And he pointed to his body and said: "And I am this bodyful." And he pointed to his soul and said: "And I am this soulful." And he pointed to the sky and said: "And I am this skyful." And he pointed to the earth-

and said: "And I am this earthful." And he pointed to the sun and the moon and said: "And I am these twoful." And he pointed to the stars and said: "And I am these starful." And he pointed to the angels and said: "And I am these angelicful." And he pointed to the jinn and said: "And I am these jinnful." And he pointed to the devils and said: "And I am these devilful." And he pointed to the fire and said: "And I am this fireful." And he pointed to the light and said: "And I am this lightful." (Musnad Ahmad)

- The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "The first thing that Allah created was my light. Then He created everything from my light. And He created me from His light. And He created you from my light. And He created everything from your light. So whoever loves me, loves Allah. And whoever loves you, loves me. And whoever loves Allah, loves me. And whoever loves me, loves you. And whoever loves you, loves everything. And whoever loves everything, loves Allah. And whoever loves Allah, loves me. And whoever loves me, loves you. And whoever loves you, loves everything. So love Allah, and love me, and love yourselves, and love everything. For everything is from Allah, and Allah is from everything. And everything is from me, and I am from everything. And everything is from you, and you are from everything." (Musnad Ahmad)

- The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "I have been given five things that no-one else has been given before me: Allah made me victorious by awe (by His frightening my enemies) for a distance of one month's journey; the earth has been made for me (and for my followers) a place for praying and a thing to perform Tayammum; the booty has been made lawful for me yet it was not lawful for anyone else before me; I have been given the right of intercession (on the Day of Resurrection); and every Prophet used to be sent to his nation only but I have been sent to all mankind." (Bukhari)

- The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "I saw my Lord in the most beautiful form. He said to me: 'O Muhammad, do you know what the angels in the heaven are disputing about?' I said: 'No.' He said: 'They are disputing about the expiations for sins. So inform your nation that good health is an expiation, and walking towards the mosques is an expiation, and saying 'SubhanAllah' (Glory be to Allah) is an expiation, and saying 'Alhamdulillah' (Praise be to Allah) is an expiation, and saying 'La ilaha illa Allah' (There is no god but Allah) is an expiation, and saying 'Allahu Akbar' (Allah is the Greatest) is an expiation.' Then He placed His hand between my shoulders until I felt its coolness in my chest. Then He said: 'O Muhammad, have you seen My Paradise?' I said: 'No.' He said: 'Look.' So I looked and saw gardens of greenery and rivers of milk and honey and wine and people of light sitting on thrones of light wearing crowns of light and bracelets of light -

and garments of light. Then He said: 'O Muhammad, do you know what these are?' I said: 'No.' He said: 'These are My servants who believed in Me and obeyed Me and loved Me and loved My Messenger. These are their rewards that no eye has seen, nor ear has heard, nor heart has conceived.' Then He said: 'O Muhammad, have you seen My Hell?' I said: 'No.' He said: 'Look.' So I looked and saw valleys of fire and mountains of fire and people of fire chained with chains of fire and whipped with whips of fire and fed with food of fire. Then He said: 'O Muhammad, do you know what these are?' I said: 'No.' He said: 'These are My servants who disbelieved in Me and disobeyed Me and hated Me and hated My Messenger. These are their punishments that no eye has seen, nor ear has heard, nor heart has conceived.'" (Musnad Ahmad)

- The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "The best of women are those who have the most light in their faces."

One way to apply the light of Islam to our lives is to follow the example of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who was described as a "walking Quran" by his wife Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her). The Prophet (peace be upon him) embodied the teachings of the Quran and showed us how to live according to Allah's will. He was kind, compassionate, generous, honest, humble, patient, forgiving, and grateful. He was also diligent in worship, prayer, fasting, charity, and seeking knowledge. He was a mercy to all creation and a leader for humanity.

Another way to apply the light of Islam to our lives is to seek knowledge and understanding of our religion. The Quran says: "And say, 'My Lord, increase me in knowledge.'" (20:114) Knowledge is a means of attaining Allah's pleasure and guidance. It helps us to know our purpose in life, our rights and responsibilities, our beliefs and practices, and our role in society. It also protects us from ignorance, doubt, confusion, and deviation. Knowledge is not only acquired by reading books or attending lectures, but also by observing nature, reflecting on ourselves, and learning from others.

A third way to apply the light of Islam to our lives is to spread it to others. The Quran says: "And who is better in speech than one who invites to Allah and does righteousness and says, 'Indeed, I am of the Muslims.'" (41:33) Spreading the light of Islam means conveying its message of peace, and justice, mercy, and salvation to those who are unaware or misinformed. It also means being a good example of a Muslim by our words and deeds. It also means supporting and cooperating with other Muslims in doing good and forbidding evil. Spreading the light of Islam is a duty and an honor for every Muslim.

These are some of the ways we can apply the light of Islam to our lives. Hope this was informative and helpful. Keep Seeking and You will find!

The End

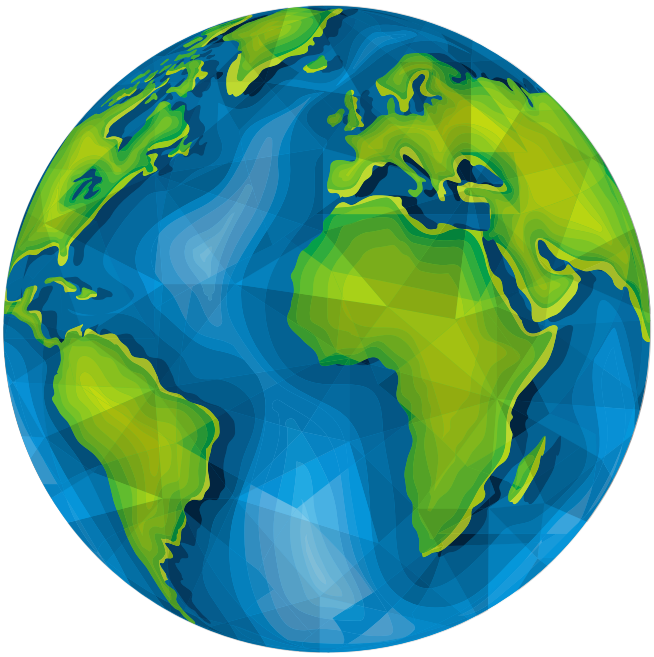
Until the Day that a Light will Shine Forth from Them

In Judaism, light has many meanings and associations. It symbolizes the presence and power of G-d, who created light on the first day and is often called the source of light. It also symbolizes the Torah, which is compared to a lamp that guides the way of life. Moreover, light represents the mitzvot, the commandments that Jews perform to bring light into the world. Finally, light signifies the human soul, which is a spark of the divine and can illuminate the darkness. Throughout Jewish history, light has been a theme of hope and resilience, from the creation of the world to the promise of redemption.

One of the most fascinating aspects of the biblical account of creation is the origin of light. The book of Genesis tells us that G-d spoke light into existence: "And G-d said: 'Let there be light.' And there was light" (Genesis 1:3). However, this light was not the same as the natural light we see from the sun or the stars, which were created later. Rather, this was a supernatural light that came from G-d's own being. This light was so powerful and holy that it filled the whole world with its radiance. The Midrash, a collection of Jewish interpretations, explains that G-d concealed this light for the benefit of the righteous in the world to come, but it still reveals itself through the Torah and the commandments (Genesis Rabbah 3:4).

What is the significance of this primordial light? Why did G-d hide it and how can we access it? According to some Jewish thinkers, this light represents the ultimate wisdom and knowledge that G-d possesses. It is the source of all truth and goodness in the world. G-d hid it because it was too overwhelming and sublime for human beings to behold in their current state. However, G-d did not completely withdraw it from the world. He gave us glimpses of it through the Torah, which is also called "the light" (Proverbs 6:23), and through the mitzvot, which is also called "the lamps" (Proverbs 6:23). By studying the Torah and performing the mitzvot, we can connect with this divine light and elevate our souls.

The Torah is the first five books of the Hebrew Scripture called The Tanakh. Torah is also known as the Pentateuch or the Chumash. It contains the laws and teachings of G-d as revealed to Moses and the Israelites. Torah is the core of the Jewish spiritual and religious tradition; it has many possible interpretations. The Torah is also called the Written Torah, to distinguish it from the Oral Torah, which consists of later rabbinic commentaries and explanations. The Torah is often compared to light, as it reveals G-d's will and wisdom to humanity. The Psalmist says: "Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path" (Psalms 119:105). The prophet Isaiah calls Israel "a light to the nations" (Isaiah 42:6), meaning that through their observance of the Torah and their ethical conduct, they can spread G-d's light to the world.



Light as Creation

The first thing that G-d created was light. In Genesis 1:3, we read: "And G-d said: 'Let there be light.' And there was light." The Midrash asks: From what did G-d create light? The answer is whispered: "G-d cloaked Himself in a white shawl, and the light of its splendor shone from one end of the world to the other" (Genesis Rabba 3:4). In other words, light is not part of this world, but a reflection of G-d's essence and glory.

The Midrash also explains that the light that G-d created on the first day was not the same as the light that we see from the sun, moon, and stars. The original light was too bright and powerful for human beings to behold, so G-d hid it away for the righteous in the future world (Chagigah 12a). This hidden light is also called the "light of the Shekhinah," or the Divine Presence, which radiates from G-d's throne in heaven.

Light as Revelation

Light is also a symbol of G-d's revelation to humanity. When G-d gave the Torah to the Jewish people at Mount Sinai, there was a great display of light and fire. The Midrash says that G-d's voice split into seventy tongues of fire, corresponding to the seventy languages of humanity so that everyone could understand His words (Shemot Rabba 5:9). The Midrash also says that each word that G-d spoke flew across the sky like a shooting star, and engraved itself on the tablets of stone (Shabbat 88b).

The Midrash also compares the Torah itself to light. The Torah is called "a lamp" (Proverbs 6:23), "a candle" (Proverbs 20:27), and "a light" (Isaiah 51:4). The Torah enlightens our minds, guides our paths, and warms our hearts. The Midrash says that whoever studies Torah is considered as if he lit a candle before G-d (Avot D'Rabbi Natan 25).

Light as Holiness

Light is also a symbol of holiness in Judaism. The Temple in Jerusalem was illuminated by a seven-branched candelabrum called the menorah, which burned pure olive oil day and night. The menorah was not just a source of physical light, but a sign of G-d's presence and favor. The Midrash says that the light of the menorah was so bright that it lit up all the courtyards of Jerusalem (Midrash Tanchuma Tetzaveh). The windows of the Temple were also designed to be narrower on the inside and wider on the outside so that the light would shine out to the world (Baba Batra 4a).

Light as Hope

Finally, light is a symbol of hope in Judaism. Despite the darkness and difficulties that we may face in life, we never give up on our faith and optimism. The Midrash tells us that when G-d created Adam, He showed him all the generations that would descend from him, both good and evil. Adam saw that some of his descendants would sin and be exiled from their land. He cried out to G-d: "Master of the universe, how long will You bear with them?" G-d answered: "Until the day that a light will shine forth from them" (Midrash Tehillim 139:8). That light is the light of the Messiah, who will redeem the world and bring peace and harmony to all.

The Midrash also teaches us that we can be part of that light by doing good deeds and spreading kindness. The Midrash says that G-d created the world with ten utterances of light, and He wants us to sustain the world with ten utterances of light as well.

These are charity, justice, truth, peace, loving-kindness, righteousness, mercy, repentance, Torah and prayer (Midrash Tanchuma Pekudei). By following these principles, we can bring more light into the world and hasten the dawn of redemption.

The Mitzvot are the commandments that God gave to the Jewish people through Moses at Mount Sinai. There are 613 Mitzvot in the Torah, which is the first five books of the Hebrew Bible. The Mitzvot covers various aspects of Jewish life, such as worship, ethics, rituals, holidays, and social justice. The Mitzvot is divided into two categories: positive and negative. Positive Mitzvot tells Jews what they should do, such as keeping the Sabbath, praying, and giving charity. Negative Mitzvot tells Jews what they should not do, such as eating pork, stealing, and murdering. The Mitzvot are a way for Jews to express their love, obedience, and gratitude to God, and to follow His will in every situation.

The Mitzvot are also likened to candles or lamps that illuminate the darkness of this world. King Solomon says: "A mitzvah is a candle, and the Torah is light" (Proverbs 6:23). The Talmud teaches that every mitzvah creates an angel of light that accompanies the person who performs it (Shabbat 23b). The mystical tradition explains that by doing a mitzvah, one draws down a spark of divine light into one's soul and into the world (Zohar 2:155b).

The soul of a human being is compared to a candle or a flame that reflects God's image. King Solomon says: "The soul of man is a lamp of God" (Proverbs 20:27). The Talmud explains that when a person dies, his or her soul ascends to heaven like a flame (Berakhot 8b). The Jewish practice of lighting a yahrzeit candle on the anniversary of a loved one's death is based on this idea.

The Talmud is the central text of Rabbinic Judaism and the primary source of Jewish religious law and theology. It consists of two main components: the Mishnah, a written compendium of the Oral Torah, and the Gemara, an elucidation of the Mishnah and related writings. The Talmud has two versions: the Jerusalem Talmud and the Babylonian Talmud. The Talmud is written in a mixture of Hebrew and Aramaic and contains teachings, discussions, stories, and laws that cover a wide range of topics. The Talmud is the product of centuries of study and debate by the rabbis of the Holy Land and Babylonia. The Talmud is also accompanied by many commentaries and interpretations by later scholars.

Light is a significant component of many Jewish rituals and holidays. One of the most famous examples is Hanukkah, the festival of lights, which commemorates the miraculous event that occurred in the Temple after the Jewish people liberated it from the Greek occupation. According to the tradition, there was only enough oil to light the Temple's menorah for one day, but it miraculously burned for eight days, until new oil could be prepared. The Hanukkah menorah, which has eight branches and a ninth candle to light the others, symbolizes not only the physical light of the Temple but also the spiritual light of faith and hope that illuminated the Jewish people throughout their history, especially in times of darkness and oppression.

Another example is Shabbat, the sacred day of rest, is marked by the ritual of lighting candles at its beginning and end. The candles symbolize the distinction between the holy and the ordinary, as well as the delight and tranquility that Shabbat offers. They also represent G-d's presence in our lives and in our homes.

Light is thus a multifaceted symbol in Judaism, expressing various aspects of G-d, Torah, mitzvot, and the human soul. It also connects us to our past, present, and future, as we celebrate God's creation, revelation, and redemption. As we gaze at the flickering flames of our candles, we can feel inspired to shine our own light in this world.

The End

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Thanks For Reading!

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